

ONE HUNDRED FIFTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION - 2017
COMMITTEE STATEMENT
LB248

Hearing Date: Monday January 23, 2017
Committee On: Business and Labor
Introducer: Harr
One Liner: Adopt the Youth Opportunities in Learning and Occupations Act

Roll Call Vote - Final Committee Action:
Advanced to General File with amendment(s)

Vote Results:

Aye:	4	Senators Chambers, Crawford, Hansen, Howard
Nay:	2	Senators Albrecht, Lowe
Absent:		
Present Not Voting:	1	Senator Halloran

Verbal Testimony:

Proponents:

Burke Harr
Hannah Young

Representing:

Introducer
NonProfit Association of the Midlands

Opponents:

Representing:

Neutral:

Greg Adams
John Spatz
Linda Richards

Representing:

Nebraska Community College Association
Nebraska Association of School Boards
Nebraska Association of School Boards

Summary of purpose and/or changes:

Sec. 1. creates the Youth Opportunities in Learning and Occupations Act.

Sec. 2. outlines legislative intent. The Legislature finds that there is a skills gap between employers and young people between the ages of 16 and 24. There is an opportunity for early investment in these young Nebraskans by offering training services in soft skills necessary to succeed in employment and identifying employment opportunities within the state.

The purpose of the Act is to prepare youth to enter the workforce, develop marketable skills and competencies, increase earning power, lower unemployment in the state, upskill current workers, engage employers in preparing youth for gainful employment, and assist in identifying and developing young people to fulfill the demand for skilled workers in this state.

Sec. 3. definitional section. Defines commissioner, demand occupation, department, employer, nonprofit corporation, and soft skills.

Sec. 4. contains which entities may apply to the Commissioner of Labor for a grant pursuant to the Act. The following entities may apply: employers providing training for demand occupations; and nonprofit corporations providing soft skills training for career readiness, career counseling, or other programming related to career readiness.

Sec. 5. requires the commissioner to distribute grant dollars pursuant to the Act in approximately equal amounts for each congressional district. If there are not enough qualified applicants in any congressional district, the commissioner may award the unused funds for applicants in another congressional district.

No more than one-half of the funds allocated to each congressional district may be awarded to employers.

In awarding grants, the commissioner will give priority to programs, services, or training that results in meaningful employment. Appeals will be in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act.

Sec. 6. requires the commissioner to file a report with the Governor and Clerk of the Legislature on or before November 1, 2018, and on or before each November 1 thereafter. The report will contain the distribution and use of grants under the Act, the number of applicants, the number of grant recipients, the types of programming services receiving funds, how many individuals the entities will train, the number of individuals successfully completing the training program, and information on any unused funds.

Sec. 7. permits the department to promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the Act. The rules and regulations shall include, but not be limited to, application timelines and requirements, guidelines for application evaluations, a plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the programs receiving grant dollars, and a reporting process for grant recipients.

Sec. 8. creates the Youth Opportunities in Learning and Occupations Fund. The Fund shall be used for administrative costs and providing grants pursuant to the Act. The Fund will consist of money appropriated by the Legislature, any money available by any department or agency of the United States if so directed, and any donations from public or private entities.

Money in the fund shall not be expended until matching funds equal to at least 100% of the money appropriated by the Legislature have been received by the commissioner.

Any money in the fund not distributed will be retained by the department to be distributed as grants in the next fiscal year.

Sec. 9. states the intent of the Legislature to appropriate \$20 million from the General Fund for fiscal year 2017-18 to carry out the Act.

Explanation of amendments:

This amendment clarifies the matching fund requirement. It states that no grant payments will be issued until the commissioner receives evidence that the grant recipient has either received matching funds from another source or irrevocably committed funds of the entity to be used equal to or greater than the amount of the grant award.

It also reduces the appropriation amount to \$2.5 million.

Joni Albrecht, Chairperson